

Tribal Real-Time Air Monitoring Initiative

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The Aroostook Band of Micmac Tribal Nation was awarded \$290,000 for a real-time air monitoring and public education project in Northern Maine. Poor air quality is a particular concern for the area, as Aroostook County has one of the highest asthma rates in the country.

This project will monitor air quality in real time and make the data immediately available to the public on a web site and through local media. The project will also use the data to generate alerts on poor air quality days, warning susceptible populations to limit outdoor activities. They currently have a weather station up and running and real-time data can be located on their web site.

The Tribe has hired a contractor to assist the Tribe with the purchase and installation of monitors for nitrogen oxides (NO_x), sulfur oxides (SO_x), carbon dioxide, fine particulate matter, ozone, ultraviolet radiation and visibility (using a digital camera). The monitors are scheduled to be installed by the end of May or beginning of June. Once the equipment is installed, it will be tied into a local media so that the data collected can assist to warn tribal members and local residents that have respiratory illness on the air quality and give appropriate public health information and warnings to residents in Aroostook County.

The Aroostook Band of Micmac Tribal Nation received significant support for this project from various health and lung organizations and in addition to local, state, federal and Tribal health organizations. A total of 13 organizations sent letters of support for this project. The Tribe partnered with EPA to determine the pollutants that were not being monitored in the area and designed the monitoring to fill in the gap of this missing data.

This Tribal real-time air monitoring project is one of the first Tribal projects to pass both internal and external peer review. This project is a model for the rest of air monitoring in Indian Country. Moreover, the data collected will be entered into EPA's national databases and will help provide invaluable information for assessing the air quality in Aroostook county and help to assess why it has some of the highest asthma rates in the country.